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ABSTRACT

The Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) was developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in response to Texas House Bill 72 (1984), which mandated a new basic skills assessment program for mathematics, reading, and writing at grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. This document is one in a series of Instructional Strategies Guides designed to familiarize Texas educators with the types of strategies employed in assessing learner mastery of TEAMS objectives and to provide suggested instructional activities that can be used to promote mastery of those objectives. This guide focuses on the TEAMS writing objectives for grade 9. It provides a detailed description of the test items used to measure each writing objective. The 11 objectives are subsumed under five skill areas: (1) mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling); (2) English usage; (3) sentence formation; (4) proofreading; and (5) organization/appropriate response to purpose and audience (informative/descriptive writing, informative/narrative writing, informative/classificatory writing, persuasive/descriptive writing, and persuasive/classificatory writing). The following information is provided for six of the objectives: (1) a description of the objective; (2) a sample item; (3) test questions; (4) answer choices; (5) answer analysis for the sample item; (6) instructional emphases; and (7) possible instructional activities. (JAZ)

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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES GUIDE

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WRITING

GRADE 9

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TEAMS INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES GUIDE

WRITING

GRADE 9

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Objective 11: Write a composition which discusses two opposing courses of action and is designed to convince a specified audience to follow one of those courses.*

* Objectives measured with a written composition will be addressed in a separate publication.

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INTRODUCTION

During 1980-1985 the Texas Education Agency (TEA) administered a criterion-referenced testing program, the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS). That program was designed to measure minimum skills in mathematics, reading, and writing at Grades 3, 5, and 9. In July 1984, under the provisions of House Bill 72, a new basic skills assessment program was mandated in mathematics, reading, and writing at Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. In response, development of the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) was instituted by TEA during the 1985-1986 school year.

School district personnel from across Texas participated in all aspects of the development of TEAMS. Basic skills objectives were selected after a thorough review of the State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum, GE4 450 01 (Essential Elements). Under TEA supervision measurement specifications and test items were developed for each objective. Statewide field testing was conducted to ensure the quality of test items. The State Board of Education then approved the TEAMS tests for administration.

Because of the significance of the TEAMS program, TEA is providing Texas educators with instructional strategies guides for all objectives measured on each TEAMS examination. These guides describe the TEAMS objectives as well as instructional considerations and activities that can be used to promote mastery of TEAMS objectives.

This instructional strategies guide focuses on the TEAMS writing objectives for Grade 9. It provides a detailed description of the test items used to measure each writing objective. In addition, a brief instructional analysis is provided for each objective as are instructional activities that can help students master the objective.

Texas educators will undoubtedly vary in the ways they wish to promote learner mastery of the TEAMS objectives. Thus, the instructional components of this guide are <u>not</u> intended to be prescriptive. Teachers should view suggested activities as potential approaches that lead to mastery of the TEAMS objectives.

<u>Components of the Instructional Strategies Guide</u>

Eleven TEAMS writing objectives are measured at the ninth grade level. These objectives are subsumed under one of five skill areas. The distribution of the writing objectives by skill area is on the next page.

SKILL AREA	OBJECTIVE
Mechanics	Capitalization Punctuation Spelling
English Usage	English Usage
Sentence Formation	Sentence Formation
Proofreading	Proofreading
Organization/Appropriate Response to Purpose and Audience	Informative/Descriptive Writing Informative/Narrative Writing Informative/Classificatory Writing Persuasive/Descriptive Writing Persuasive/Classificatory Writing

This guide provides the following information for each of the writing objectives included in the TEAMS Grade 9 test.

Description of the objective. This section provides a succinct overview of the objective's focus.

Sample item. An illustrative sample item follows the description of each objective. This item is consistent with the test specifications for the objective, hence is representative of the TEAMS items used to measure students' mastery of the objective.

Test questions. To provide a more detailed view of how each TEAMS objective is assessed, the next section provides a description of the test question. For example, Grade 7 spelling and composition items present a stimulus or test question. Test items for other ninth grade writing objectives present directions followed by four answer choices. This component of the guide provides these directions as well as a list of rules eligible for testing.

Answer choices. The next section deals with the response to each multiple-choice test item. For multiple-choice items, important characteristics of the answer choices are described.

Answer analysis for sample item. An analysis of the answer choices from the sample item is then provided for objectives measured by multiple-choice items, that is, all objectives except composition. This analysis explains why the correct answer is right and why the incorrect answers are wrong.

Instructional emphases. Considerations relevant to the design of instructional sequences for each TEAMS objective are described in this section. These instructional analyses are not intended to represent the only important points associated with instruction aimed at a particular objective. However, it is hoped that these discussions will stimulate educators' consideration of each objective.

Possible instructional activities. A final section discusses several instructional activities for each objective that Texas educators may consider as they organize their instructional plans.

Use of the Instructional Strategies Guide

This TEAMS instructional strategies guide is designed to accomplish two goals. First, the guide enables Texas educators to become familiar with the types of strategies employed to assess learner mastery of the TEAMS Grade 9 writing objectives. Educators who wish to learn more about how the TEAMS objectives are tested should consult the TEAMS objectives and measurement specifications available at cost from TEA. The level of detail provided in this instructional strategies guide should provide sufficient information for educators to design effective instructional sequences. Second, each instructional strategies guide provides suggestions for instructional activities that can be used to promote mastery of TEAMS objectives.

The specific setting in which a given district chooses to provide instruction in the TEAMS objectives will influence the way in which the materials in this guide can be employed. The format of the guide permits flexible use.

TEAMS ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS OBJECTIVES

WRITING: GRADE NINE

Six of the ten TEAMS ninth grade writing objectives are measured by multiple-choice items that generally present four words or groups of words, one of which is written correctly. Each test item contains four answer choices, only one of which will be correct. All possible answer choices will be indicated by letters. The test items represent the types of writing that students might produce in school, at home, or in their community; for example, friendly or business letters as well as narrative, descriptive, or expository essays. The objectives tested in this part of the writing section of the TEAMS ninth grade examination are, according to skill area:

- Mechanics
  - Capitalization
  - Punctuation
  - Spelling
- English Usage
- Sentence Formation
- Proofreading

The remaining five objectives require the student to write a composition. Only one of these objectives will be tested each year. The objectives eligible for testing in this part of the writing section of the TEAMS ninth grade examination are:

- Organization/Appropriate Response to Purpose and Audience
  - Informative/Descriptive Writing
  - Informative/Narrative Writing
  - Informative/Classificatory Writing
  - Persuasive/Descriptive Writing
  - Persuasive/Classificatory Writing

SKILL AREA: MECHANICS

The skill area of mechanics includes three objectives, namely, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. For test items measuring capitalization and punctuation, the student will be presented with four sentences and asked to select the sentence that is written correctly. For test items measuring spelling, the student will be presented with a sentence that is missing a word, then asked to select the correct spelling of the missing word from four possible spellings.

Objective 1: Demonstrate knowledge of standard uses of capitalization.

This objective requires students to identify which one of four sentences contains correct capitalization.

Sample Item

Choose the sentence that has the correct capitalization.

A. My favorite holiday is halloween.

B. Sandy dressed as an English king.

C. He enjoys reading history Books.

D. we also read plays together and act out the parts.

Test Questions

1. Four sentences, as described below, will constitute each test question.

2. Preceding the four sentences will be the instruction, "Choose the sentence that has the correct capitalization."

3. The following capitalization rules are eligible for testing:

   a. Capitalize the first word in a sentence.

   b. Capitalize the pronoun "I."

   c. Capitalize the names of persons, nationalities, and languages.

   d. Capitalize the names of days of the week and months of the year.

e. Capitalize cities, states, countries, and particular places (for example, Big Bend National Park).

f. Capitalize titles of persons (limited to Dr., Mr., Ms., Miss, and Mrs.).

g. Capitalize the names of holidays.

h. Capitalize the appropriate parts of a letter.

i. Avoid unnecessary capitalization.

Answer Choices

1. A test item will consist of four groups of words, each of which is either a sentence, a letter salutation, or a letter closing. Only one word group will be capitalized correctly.

2. The correct answer will illustrate one or more of the nine capitalization rules listed above.

3. Each incorrect answer will contain one or more violations of the aforementioned capitalization rules, including instances of unnecessary capitalization.

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. Answer choice A is incorrect because the word "Halloween" is not capitalized. The names of holidays should be capitalized. The first word of the sentence, "My", is correctly capitalized.

2. Answer choice B is correct. The first word of the sentence, "Sandy", is capitalized correctly. "Sandy" is also the name of a person and would require capitalization even if it appeared elsewhere in the sentence. Also, the word "English" is capitalized correctly because it is the name of a nationality.

3. Answer choice C is incorrect because the word "books" should not be capitalized. A common noun does not require capitalization. The first word of the sentence, "He," is correctly capitalized.

4. Answer choice D is incorrect because the first word of the sentence, "we," is not capitalized. The first word of a sentence requires capitalization.

Instructional Emphases

Capitalization, like punctuation, serves a clarifying function in written communication. Capital letters provide signals

to the reader of a passage. Without capital letters to distinguish certain words and mark the beginnings of sentences, a written communication would be ambiguous and possibly undecipherable.

Encourage your students to review capitalization rules and to pay careful attention to employing these rules in their writing. Stress the importance of capitalization in establishing significant differences between the meanings of words (for example, the difference between "may" and "May"). Reinforce the distinction between common nouns and proper nouns, reviewing that capital letters in this case serve a purpose of individualization. For example, "El Paso" and "Houston" (proper nouns) are specific, individual members of the class of entities called "cities" (a common noun). This distinction is made clear by the use of capitalization.

Along with standard capitalization rules as they apply to proper nouns, students should become familiar with the use of capitalization in the salutatory and closing elements of a friendly letter. Capital letters in this instance serve as signals, similar to the purpose they serve at the beginnings of sentences. They move the reader from one part of the letter to another.

A total of 14 specific applications of initial capitalization is tested on the ninth grade TEAMS examination. In addition, students must watch for unnecessary capital letters appearing at the beginnings of words such as verbs and, particularly, common nouns. By familiarizing your students with these fundamental capitalization rules, you can improve their writing skills and help them to succeed on this section of the TEAMS.

Possible Instructional Activities

A Capital Idea

Prepare copies of a paragraph containing no periods and no capital letters. Distribute these worksheets and have students place a double underline--the editing symbol indicating that capitalization is required--beneath the letters in the paragraph that should be capitalized. They should also insert periods where necessary. Students should be able to clarify the ambiguous paragraph by identifying the beginning and ending of each sentence. Include also uncapitalized proper nouns such as those eligible for testing on this section of the ninth grade TEAMS examination.

Quick Capitals

Practice in identification of words that require capitalization will help to familiarize students with standard capitalization rules. Prepare a series of flash cards that have words, phrases, or sentences that require capitalization. Some of the cards should demonstrate correct capitalization and others should include capitalization errors (for example, "the fourth of July," "Dear bill," "Spanish," and "i will be going to Yosemite next Summer."). Hold up each card and ask students if the word, phrase, or sentence is correctly capitalized. Have students make the corrections as they write the word, phrase, or sentence on a piece of paper. Hold up the card long enough for everyone to read its contents, but move swiftly to the next card.

Letter Writing

Students can use their knowledge of capitalization rules in a letter-writing activity. Have each of your students write a letter inviting a friend to visit. Tell your students that a letter should be dated and include a proper salutation and closing. Also, ask your students to try to include dates of events and names of places that they will show their friends during the visit. Students should also include proper nouns such as names of people and days of the week. Have students exchange letters and correct each other's capitalization errors.

Conspicuous Capitals

Prepare a list of sentences in which all words are capitalized. (For example, "My Mother Went To Arizona For A Week.") Have your students rewrite each sentence, leaving in the necessary capitals but replacing the unnecessary capitals with lowercase letters.

The opposite approach can also be employed by making a list of sentences without any capital letters. (For example, "we will see the alamo on memorial day.") Students can rewrite the sentences and capitalize the appropriate words.

Objective 2: Demonstrate knowledge of standard punctuation.

This objective requires students to identify which one of four sentences contains correct punctuation.

Sample Item

Choose the sentence that has the correct punctuation.

A. Are you going to the hardware store tomorrow.

B. Mel needs a hammer nails, and a wrench for his tool box.

C. He left his tools in Lubbock, Texas.

D. Daphne make sure you sweep the floor before leaving.

Test Questions

1. Four sentences, as described below, will constitute each test question.

2. Preceding the four answer choices will be the instruction, "Choose the sentence that has the correct punctuation."

3. The following punctuation rules are eligible for testing:

   a. Periods are required after abbreviations and at the end of declarative and imperative sentences.

   b. Question marks are required at the end of interrogative sentences.

   c. Commas are required between city and state, between items (words, phrases,or clauses) in a series, in the salutation of a friendly letter, in the closing of a letter and in setting off a noun of direct address. (Students will not be tested on the use of the comma before "and" or "or" in a series.)

   d. Apostrophes are required in contractions and in singular possessives.

Answer Choices

1. A test item will consist of four groups of words, each of which is either a sentence, a salutation, or a closing. Only one word group will be punctuated correctly.

2. The correct answer will illustrate one or more of the punctuation rules listed above.

3. Each incorrect answer choice will contain one or more of the following rule violations:

   a. The omission of punctuation at the end of a sentence.

   b. The substitution of a period for a question mark at the end of an interrogative sentence.

   c. The omission of a comma necessary to set off a noun of direct address, in the salutation or closing of a friendly letter, between words in a series, or between the proper nouns comprising a city and a state. (Students will not be tested on the use of the comma before "and" or "or" in a series.)

   d. The omission or misplacement of an apostrophe in singular possessives and in contractions.

   e. The use of an unnecessary comma (for example, between the subject and verb of a sentence) or apostrophe (for example, in a possessive personal pronoun such as "his" or "ours").

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. Answer choice A is incorrect because a period has been substituted for a question mark at the end of the sentence. This is an interrogative sentence and thereby requires a question mark as its ending punctuation.

2. Answer choice B is incorrect because the comma has been omitted between the words "hammer" and "nails," which are the first two items in a series. A comma is required to separate the first two items in a series. The optional comma preceding the word "and" has been included, but it is not eligible for testing. The sentence is correctly terminated with a period.

3. Answer choice C is correct. The sentence terminates correctly with a period, and the use of a comma between the city and state ("Lubbock" and "Texas") is correct.

4. Answer choice D is incorrect because the comma has been omitted between the proper noun "Daphne" and the imperative verb "make." A comma is required to set off nouns of direct address.

Instructional Emphases

Just as traffic signs and signals guide us when we drive, punctuation marks serve as guideposts for the reader to follow. The driver of an automobile follows the rules of the road in order to get from one place to another as smoothly as possible.

Likewise, writers must follow punctuation conventions in order to guide their readers smoothly through a passage. Therefore, it is necessary that students become familiar with basic punctuation rules and follow these important conventions in their writing. By learning to punctuate correctly, students can provide their readers with the means to clarify material that might otherwise be ambiguous.

Encourage your students to check their writing for correct punctuation before they submit it for grading. The 11 rules of punctuation that are tested on the ninth grade TEAMS examination represent essential and fundamental punctuation conventions. Students should master these conventions and acquire an understanding of how punctuation serves to clarify for readers that which the writer intends to communicate.

Possible Instructional Activities

Punctuation Puzzles

Students can demonstrate their knowledge of punctuation conventions to clarify the meaning of a passage. Write a brief paragraph on the board or on a transparency. Leave out most correct uses of punctuation marks and insert punctuation marks erroneously in several of the sentences. (For example, "The student's ran for cover when the rain began to fall.") Go through the paragraph or story with the class, making the necessary punctuation corrections.

Unpunctuated Paragraphs

Students will be able to utilize their knowledge of punctuation rules to clarify an ambiguous passage. Prepare an unpunctuated paragraph of 50 to 75 words. Distribute copies to each of your students and have them punctuate the paragraph. It would be useful to install the need for as many different punctuation usages as possible. For example, try to use abbreviated titles such as "Mr." or "Ms." without periods, dates without commas, and interrogative, declarative, and imperative sentences without ending punctuation marks. Also, try to include unpunctuated contractions and possessive nouns. After the students have finished, have them exchange papers and check each other's work using a different colored pen or pencil. Once each paper has been returned to its original owner, go over the punctuation required in the paragraph with the class.

Selective Sentences

Students will be able to recognize whether sentences are correctly punctuated by spot-checking sentences for punctuation errors. Either on the board or on distributed sheets of paper,

prepare a list of declarative and interrogative sentences. Punctuate one-third of the sentences correctly. Leave one-third of the sentences without any punctuation. Include incorrect punctuation on the remaining one-third of the sentences. Have students add and delete punctuation marks as necessary. Pass out red pencils (if available) for this exercise so that students can readily see the corrections.

Objective 3: Recognize the correct spelling of commonly used words.

This objective requires students to recognize, from four possible spellings, the correct spelling of a word that is missing from a sentence.

Sample Item

Choose the correct spelling of the word that goes in the blank.

Chris was required to _____ the project.

A. analize

B. annalyze

C. anelyze

D. analyze

Test Questions

1. A test question will consist of a sentence with a missing word. The correctly spelled version of the word is to be selected from among four possible choices as described below.

2. Preceding the test question will be the instruction, "Choose the correct spelling of the word that goes in the blank."

3. Neither contractions nor homonyms will be tested.

Answer Choices

1. Four possible spellings of the missing word will be presented, one of which will be the correct spelling of the word.

2. The correct answer choice will be the correct spelling of the missing word.

3. The incorrect answer choices will be the most common misspellings of the word tested.

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. Answer choice A is incorrect because an "i" has been substituted for the "y."

2. Answer choice B is incorrect because an extra "n" has been added, creating an incorrect double consonant construction.

3. Answer choice C is incorrect because an "e" has been substituted for the "a" between the "n" and the "l."

4. Answer choice D is correct. This is the correct spelling of the word "analyze."

Instructional Emphases

Most students at this level possess knowledge of spelling generalizations based on sound-letter associations. Students have also acquired knowledge of a variety of sight words that do not follow these correspondences. By continually building on this foundation of spelling competency, you can help your students to improve their writing abilities.

Dictionary use cannot be emphasized enough. Even the best spellers occasionally encounter words of whose spellings they are uncertain. Learning to use a dictionary proficiently is a skill that will prove useful to students throughout their lives. It will not only help them to find the correct spellings of difficult words, but the process of searching for these words will also serve to improve students' spelling skills in general.

Possible Instructional Activities

Structural Spelling

Dividing words into their component structural parts--roots and affixes--is an important aspect of spelling competency. "Long" words such as "personality," "international," and "undoubtedly" are far less formidable to spell when they are broken down into recognizable units of meaning (person-al-ity, inter-nation-al, un-doubt-ed-ly). The process of decoding unfamiliar words through structural analysis can be enhanced by making students aware of how words encountered in reading are put together.

Have students bring to class words that can be structurally analyzed--that is, words that can be divided into a root and one or more affixes. Write a suggested word on the board and ask the student who provided the word to identify the root and the affixes. Discuss the meaning of the root, if necessary, and the added meaning(s) brought to the word by its affix(es). Repeat with several such words. In addition, you may wish to divide words further, into any compound elements (as in mis-under-standing) that may be present and then into syllables (mis-un-der-stand-ing). For purposes of reinforcement and checking for understanding, you may want to implement an occasional spelling quiz on words examined earlier in the week.

Word Building

Building words from a given set of letters may increase students' awareness of spelling conventions and constraints in English. Select a long word such as INTERCONTINENTAL or REVISUALIZATION and write it on the chalkboard. Tell students that they are to spell as many words as they can using the letters in the word on the board. Establish a time limit such as five or ten minutes. At the end of this time, find out who generated the largest number of words and ask that student to explain any strategies used. Discuss word-building strategies such as:

- More than four-fifths of English words begin with consonants or consonant clusters. Two-letter consonant clusters are formed by adding -r or -l to one of the following consonants: b-, c-, f-, g-, k-, p-, s- (with -l only), and t- (with -r only). In addition, some clusters are formed by adding s- to -c, -k, -m, -n, -p, -qu, -t, and -w. Three-letter consonant clusters can be formed by adding s- to two-letter clusters: for example, scr-, spl-, spr-, and str.

- English sometimes uses two or three letters to represent a single sound: for example, ch, tch, sh, sch, gh, th, wh, ph, kn, and wr.

- c, l, m, n, r, and s can be used before other consonants at the ends of words (as in "duct," "self," "blimp," "rink," "bird," and "best") and medially (as in "picture," "swelter," "hamper," "milky," "partition," and "pasture").

- Various vowel combinations can be inserted in consonant "frames" to make words; for example, using English vowels and vowel patterns with the consonant frame br/d can generate words such as "bred," "bread," "breed," "braid," "bread," "brood," and "bride." (In addition, inserting consonants as in the previous strategy creates words such as "brand" and "brandy.")

Your students may have additional word-building strategies to contribute. Following the discussion, have students draw a line beneath their initial word list and spend an additional five or ten minutes building words from the same word's letters. Students should find that their word-building abilities have improved.

Phonetic Puzzlers

Correct spelling through word-sound familiarization can be demonstrated to students by using the phonetic spellings found in dictionaries. Prepare a list of words, using phonetic spellings (for example, ak nol ij m nt for acknowledgment). You may want to consult the dictionary for this. Try to select words that are not easily identified (for example, in deks). Have students write the correct spelling of the phonetic word and then use the word in a simple sentence. When they have finished, students can check their work with a dictionary. Write on the board the correct spelling for any phonetically spelled word that gives your students trouble. Go over such words so that your students understand specific sound-letter group relationships (for example, ij and edg in acknowledgment).

SKILL AREA: ENGLISH USAGE

Objective 4: Demonstrate knowledge of correct English usage.

This objective requires students to identify which one of four sentences employs correct English usage.

Sample Item

Choose the sentence that is written correctly. Capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are correct in all sentences.

A. Lloyd sended me a letter the other day.

B. Him called me on the telephone yesterday.

C. This morning I received the letter.

D. He told me about a party he went to last weak.

Test Questions

1. Four answer choices, as described below, will constitute each test question.

2. Preceding the four answer choices will be the instructions, "Choose the sentence that is written correctly. Capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are correct in all sentences."

3. The following usage rules are eligible for testing:

   a. Subject-Verb Agreement: A verb must agree in number and in person with its subject.

   b. Verb Conjugation: All regular and common irregular verbs must be conjugated correctly.

   c. Verb Tense: A verb must agree in tense with the time sense of a sentence.

   d. Comparative and Superlative Forms: A comparative or superlative adjective must be formed correctly.

   e. Word Choice: The appropriate word must be selected for use in a sentence.

   f. Negative Constructions: A negative construction must be formed correctly.

g. Nominative Forms of Pronouns: A pronoun acting as a subject must be in its nominative case form.

Answer Choices

1. A test item will consist of four sentences. Only one sentence will demonstrate correct English usage.

2. The verb conjugations that are used will be in the past, present, present perfect, past perfect, or future tense ("painted," "paints," "has painted," "had painted," "will paint") or in the continuous present or past tense ("is flying," "was flying").

3. The correct answer will illustrate one or more of the following:

   a. correct subject-verb agreement

   b. the correct verb form (conjugation and tense)

   c. the correct nominative form of a pronoun as a subject

   d. the correct comparative or superlative form of an adjective

   e. correct word choice

   f. avoidance of double negatives
   (The use of "scarcely" and "hardly" will not be tested.)

4. Each incorrect answer will contain one error representing one or more of the following English usage violations:

   a. lack of subject-verb agreement

      (1) number (example of error: "We am going to the dance together on Friday night.")

      (2) person (example of error: "He wear the same silly old hat every day.")

   b. incorrect verb conjugation

      (1) an irregular verb conjugated as if it were regular (example of error: "Alison bringed her cousin with her to the party.")

      (2) the verb "be" used as a main verb (example of error: "I can't talk now because I be studying for my algebra test.")

c. incorrect verb tense--a verb contradicting the time sense of the sentence (example of error: "Two weeks ago I'm going to San Antonio.")

d. incorrect nominative forms of pronouns as subject (example of error: "Them are working on their science project."

e. incorrect comparative or superlative forms of adjectives

(1) a double comparison or superlative (example of error: "Kelly is the most friendliest person I know.")

(2) a nonexistent "-er" or "-est" form (example of error: "This book is interestinger than the one I read last week.")

f. incorrect word choice (example of error: "The principle of our school is Dr. Esquivel.")

g. use of a double negative (example of error: "We don't never go to school on Saturdays.")

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. Answer choice A is incorrect. The irregular past tense of the verb "send" is conjugated as if it were regular. The verb should be "sent," not "sended."

2. Answer choice B is incorrect. The subject pronoun, which should be in the nominative case ("He"), is in the objective case ("Him").

3. Answer choice C is correct.

4. Answer choice D is incorrect. It contains an incorrect homonym, "weak." The correct word is "week."

Instructional Emphases

People learn to speak American English in a variety of ways, depending on their heritage and on where they live. The diversity of speech habits that exists among individuals in this country contributes to our national identity. We are a diverse people, with diverse backgrounds, thoughts, feelings, and ways of expressing ourselves.

Although varying manners of speech exist, and always will, it is necessary for a people to have a common, universally understood communication code. When an author writes a book or a magazine article, that written work should be comprehensible to

as many English speakers as possible. When someone sends a letter to a person in another part of the country, the letter should be readily understandable to the recipient--even if the sender and the recipient speak different dialects.

When imposing standard American English forms on your students, it may be helpful to explain these reasons for conformity in writing customs. You may also want to encourage them to use these standard forms when they speak with individuals from outside their community. Emphasize--for the sake of young students' self-esteem and sense of identity--that switching to these forms in certain situations makes things easier for everyone, and that one's normal way of speaking has its own special value and uses.

When students produce their own writing, you may wish to encourage them to write first drafts freely, without constraint. Screening for usage errors can come later, after ideas have been allowed to "flow onto the paper."

Possible Instructional Activities

Hear Here!

To promote familiarity with common one-syllable homonyms, provide practice in their use. You may wish to begin the activity by asking students to name pairs of words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. As you write them on the board, obtain a meaning for each spelling. You might ask your students to take notes on these spellings and meanings. Inform students that they will need to know this information to write sentences later. You can suggest homonyms when students are no longer able to generate them. Some of the homonyms you may obtain are:

break/brake	hear/here
there/their/they're	pair/pear
not/knot	to/two/too
meet/meat	week/weak
deer/dear	blew/blue
our/hour	waist/waste

Students may suggest less commonly known homonyms such as hare (hair), bare (bear), and feat (feet). Whether or not you offer them yourself will depend upon the level of your students' competence.

Have students work independently to create an illustrative sentence for each term. Share these sentences among students in a class discussion before collecting papers.

As a variation, student can write a single sentence for each set of homonyms. For example:

Our friend Marta arrived an hour ago.
I blew out the blue candle's flame.
He's feeling weak this week.

Handout Homonyms

This activity is more advanced than the previous homonym activity. Hand out lists of homonym (and near-homonym) pairs such as:

course	coarse	miner	minor
principal	principle	stationery	stationary
past	passed	weather	whether
effect	affect (as verb)	except	accept

Provide a dictionary for each student. Have students write sentences containing the listed words, one sentence per homonym.

When students have completed their sentences, call on a student to read a sentence aloud and then repeat the homonym contained in the sentence. (For example: "My Uncle Gregorio has many secrets about his past. Past.") Call on another student to spell the homonym that was used in the sentence.

You might want to write on the board sentences that effectively employ the listed words. Clarify confusions as they arise, directing students' attention to dictionary meanings when necessary.

The Right Homonym

This activity can serve as a follow-up to the previous activity, perhaps occurring as a quiz a few days later. Prepare a list of sentences that require choices between homonyms. You may include one sentence per pair or two sentences per pair as follows:

The (whether/weather) is sunny and warm today.

Maria doesn't know (whether/weather) she can go to the movies with us tonight.

I bought some envelopes at the (stationery/stationary) store.

Although he tried and tried to move the boulder, it remained (stationery/stationary).

Chronic Confusion

Some words that are not homonyms are often confused with each other when they appear in certain contexts. These confusions can result in English usage errors such as:

I am taller then my older brother.
Elias is very quite; he seldom speaks.

The above usage errors involve confusion between words that are not homonyms but sound similar, particularly when they appear within an utterance. Other words are sometimes confused due to related meanings or dialectal idiosyncracies.

My mother learned me how to play the guitar.
Leave go of my coat!
Penelope went home and laid down.

As you read students' writings and hear students speak, note these types of errors until you have accumulated a series of five to ten such pairs of words. You may also wish to write the sentences in which you heard or read the usage errors. These sentences will provide you with examples to which you can refer when you present these "words often confused" to your students.

Go over these sentences one at a time, writing each on the board. Discuss, with input from students whenever possible, (1) the error, (2) the word that should have been used, and (3) why the two words became confused with each other. Have students write the correct forms of the sentences in their notebooks, along with conjugations of verbs such as "lay" and "lie" and other helpful usage notes.

Item Creation

Ask each student to write a paragraph, approximately five sentences long, in which the student addresses one of the following topics:

1. Describe an event that happened last weekend.

2. Describe a friend or relative.

3. Briefly summarize the plot of a movie.

4. Describe a future plan and its purpose.

These writing prompts are designed to elicit writing in various tenses. If you wish, you can assign students to specific prompts to ensure that this diversity will occur.

Collect the writing responses. Some or all of these responses will be used as the bases for practice items of the same type as those appearing in the English usage section. For example:

> My aunt is named Louisa. She is very tall and thin. Her clothes are colorful and rather strange, and she loves to wear bizarre hats. She plays trumpet in an orchestra that travels all over the world. Last month she went to Australia and New Zealand. I think she has an interesting life.

Create a practice item from this paragraph according to test question and answer choice descriptions. For example:

> Choose the sentence that is written correctly. Capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are correct in all sentences.
>
> A. Aunt Louisa be very tall and thin.
>
> B. Her clothes is colorful and strange.
>
> C. She plays trumpet in an orchestra that travels all over the world.
>
> D. Last month she goed to Australia and New Zealand.

Employ such items to provide practice in solving TEAMS usage items.

A Friendly Chat

As you hear usage errors in students' speech or see such errors in their writing, note the errors. Periodically, select four or five sentences to present and discuss with the class. The sentences should represent a variety of usage errors. For example:

1. I don't want no milk today.
   (double negative)

2. Marcia and me are going to the mall.
   (object pronoun as subject)

3. She's the most strictest teacher in the school.
   (double superlative)

4. We is having fun.
   (subject-verb agreement)

5. I knowed most of the answers on that test.
   (incorrect verb conjugation)

Proceed by writing a sentence on the board, calling on a student to read it aloud, and asking students to tell you what is wrong with the sentence.

Objective 5: Demonstrate the ability to distinguish complete sentences from fragments and/or run-ons.

This objective requires students to identify which one of four groups of words forms a complete sentence.

Sample Item

Find the one choice in each group of words that is a complete sentence (not a sentence fragment or a run-on).

A. My sister is five years old, her name is Genevieve.

B. Likes to play tricks on me.

C. She hid my books the other day.

D. In the closet under her shoes.

Test Questions

1. Four groups of words, as described below, will be presented.

2. Preceding each set of four groups of words will be the instruction, "Find the one choice in each group of words that is a complete sentence (not a sentence fragment or a run-on)."

Answer Choices

1. Each group of words will begin with a capital letter and end with a period. One group will be a complete simple, compound, or complex sentence. Each of the other three groups will be either a sentence fragment or a run-on as described below.

2. The correct answer will be the complete sentence. This sentence will follow normal sentence order (for example, subject-verb-complement or subject-verb-modifier).

3. A fragment will consist of a brief phrase or word group. A run-on will consist of two independent clauses written as a single sentence. Each incorrect answer will exemplify one of the following:

   a. a word group with a subject but no predicate (example of error: "The house across the street.")

b. a word group with a predicate but no subject (example of error: "Goes to the movies every Saturday night.") (Groups of words that could be imperative forms--"Go home." "Play the guitar."--will not be tested.)

c. one or more prepositional phrases (example of error: "In the parking lot behind the school.")

d. one or more participial phrases (examples of error: "Eating his pea soup." "Burned to a crisp.")

e. two independent clauses with no period between them (example of error: "We are going to the mountains next week it will be fun.")

f. two independent clauses with a comma between them (example of error: "The baby is in the cradle, she is sleeping.")

g. a subordinate clause (example of error: "After they shined their boots.")

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. Answer A is incorrect. This is a run-on consisting of two independent clauses connected by a comma.

2. Answer B is incorrect. A predicate with no subject, this group of words forms a sentence fragment.

3. Answer C is correct. This is a complete sentence, containing both subject and predicate.

4. Answer D is incorrect. It is a sentence fragment consisting of two prepositional phrases.

Instructional Emphases

On the TEAMS examination, ninth graders are required to recognize a complete sentence as distinct from a sentence fragment or a run-on. A complete sentence contains a subject and a predicate and expresses a completed thought. A sentence fragment is a group of words that does not form a sentence because it does not express a complete thought. A run-on occurs when two or more sentences are combined with only a comma, or no punctuation, between them. Providing review in these concepts and practice in differentiating these three types of word groups will help your students to recognize them easily when they appear.

A sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. The subject of a sentence contains at least one noun or pronoun. It is the part of the sentence about which something is being

said. The predicate, which contains at least one verb, says something about the subject.

Subject	Predicate
My friends and I	like to walk in the park.
People of all ages	were dancing in the moonlight.
Many lizards	live in the desert.

Alone, a subject or a predicate is not a complete sentence; it is a sentence fragment. Even a group of words that does contain a subject and a verb can, however, be a sentence fragment if this group of words begins with a subordinating conjunction. In this case, the words form a subordinate clause.

Because my friends and I like to walk in the park.

The addition of the word "because" has rendered a complete thought ("My friends and I like to walk in the park.") incomplete ("Because my friends and I like to walk in the park..."). Therefore, the group of words is a sentence fragment.

Two other types of sentence fragments are prepositional phrases and participial phrases. These groups of words are, as their labels indicate, phrases--not sentences. They cannot stand alone; they can only form parts of sentences.

On the counter in the kitchen.
Beside me on the sofa. prepositional phrase fragments
At the picnic.

Exhausted and sunburned.
Pouring catsup on his hamburger. participial phrase fragments
Singing in the shower.

A run-on sentence is two complete sentences run together without a conjunction to join them. It occurs with a comma between the sentences or with no punctuation at all. A run-on is not a complete sentence; it needs to be separated into two sentences or provided with a proper conjuction (or, as in this sentence, a semi-colon). The following are run-ons:

I met a nice girl at the dance, her name is Elena.
Jonathan works on a farm during the summer it is hard work.

Even without a conscious understanding of the terminology described above, English-speaking students possess an internalized sense of the language that tells them when a group of words "doesn't sound right." A fragment leaves a question in the reader's or listener's mind; it conveys a sense of incompleteness. A run-on, on the other hand, tries to say too much in one sentence, without a proper connection of ideas. As a teacher, you can help your students by encouraging them to listen to their intuitions regarding language aspects such as sentence structure.

Possible Instructional Activities

Familiar Fragments

This activity is designed to familiarize students with various types of fragments. Although it is not necessary for students to know these labels in order to differentiate fragments from complete sentences, this knowledge can facilitate the process for some students. When students see these fragments on the TEAMS test, they can eliminate them with confidence. The types of sentence fragments students will encounter are:

- subject with no predicate
- predicate with no subject
- prepositional phrase(s)
- participial phrase(s)
- subordinate clause

Describe each type of fragment, providing examples. To check for understanding, ask students for further examples. Make sure that your students understand that these are sentence fragments, parts of sentences that are sometimes mistakenly written as sentences.

For further reinforcement and practice, produce handouts on which are listed examples of these kinds of fragments. For each fragment, students are to (1) identify the fragment type and (2) form a complete sentence containing the fragment.

Catching Run-Ons

Write a list of twenty sentences, 10 of which are run-ons and 10 of which are properly formed compound and complex sentences. Ask students to indicate (by underlining or with a check mark or asterisk) the run-ons and to rewrite each run-on at the bottom of the page. Identify and correct the first few run-ons together, as a group activity. Discuss ways in which each run-on can be corrected. Leave the corrected versions on the board to serve as models when students work independently. You may wish to have your students rewrite each run-on in two ways: (1) as two separate sentences and (2) as a correctly formed compound or complex sentence.

Paragraph Preening

Write three to five paragraphs in which several sentence fragments and run-ons appear. The following is an example of such a paragraph.

Yesterday evening my brother and I prepared dinner. For our parents. It was their anniversary, they have been married for sixteen years. The dinner was delicious. Hamburgers and french fries. Even a healthy green salad. We had chocolate cake for dessert. My parents said they enjoyed the meal, they thanked us for making it. Had a fun evening.

Have students underline the run-ons once and the fragments twice. Students are then to rewrite the paragraphs, eliminating all sentence formation errors.

SKILL: PROOFREADING

Objective 6: Demonstrate the ability to proofread a written communication.

This objective requires students to identify whether there is an error in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, or English usage within a specified part of a communication.

Sample Items

Directions: Read each line of the passage. On each line, look for a mistake in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or in the way a word is used. If you find a mistake in an underlined part, mark the letter under this part on your answer sheet. If you don't find a mistake, mark answer choice D or H on your answer sheet.

My (A) friend Jake (B) paid me a complament (C) yesterday. He	No Mistake (D)
said (E) that i (F) was intelligent (G), kind, and artistic. We	No Mistake (H)
have been (A) friends since we was (B) small children (C). I	No Mistake (D)
hope we'll (E) always (F) be as close as we are (G) now.	No Mistake (H)

Test Questions

1. Four lines of text comprising a story or description will be presented. Each line of text will be a test item containing four answer choices, as described below.

2. Preceding each group of four lines of text will be the instructions, "Read each line of the passage. On each line, look for a mistake in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or in the way a word is used. If you find a mistake in an underlined part, mark the letter under this part on your answer sheet. If you don't find a mistake, mark answer choice D or H on your answer sheet."

Answer Choices

1. Each line of text, each of which constitutes a test item, will contain three parts that are underlined. An underlined part will include one or more words and/or numbers. Beneath these three underlined parts will appear the letters A, B, and C or E, F, and G, respectively. One of these three underlined parts may contain an error in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or usage. At the end of each line of

text will appear the underlined term "No Mistake," beneath which will appear the letter D or H.

2. If an error in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or usage exists in the line of text, the correct answer will be the letter corresponding to the underlined part that contains the error. Only the errors defined as eligible in each individual skill area will be eligible for testing in the proofreading section.

   If no error exists in the line of text, the correct answer will be D or H, the "No Mistake" response.

3. If a line of text contains an error, the three incorrect answer choices will be the two underlined parts that are written correctly and D or H, the "No Mistake" answer choice.

   If the line of text is written correctly, with no errors, the three incorrect answer choices are the underlined parts of text, labeled either A, B, and C or E, F, and G.

4. No line of text will exceed 15 words in length.

5. An underlined part may extend beyond a word to indicate that the punctuation mark or lack of punctuation will be considered. An underlined part at the end of a sentence will extend beyond the final word to include the period or lack of a period. Whenever a group of words indicating a date, a place, or a person is tested, the entire group of words will be underlined.

Answer Analysis for Sample Items

NOTE: In the proofreading objective, each one of the four lines of text comprising a unified description or story constitutes a test item. Each line, therefore, contains a correct answer choice and three incorrect answer choices.

1. The first line of text contains a spelling error: "compliment" is misspelled as "complament." Because this underlined part is labeled "C," choice C is the correct answer for this line of text. Answers A and B are incorrect answer choices because they are written correctly. Answer D, "No Mistake," is also an incorrect answer choice. It erroneously states that no error exists in the preceding line of text.

2. The correct answer for the second line of text is F. The underlined part contains a capitalization error: the pronoun "I" is not capitalized. Answers E and G are incorrect choices because they contain no errors. Answer H is incorrect because the line of text does contain an error.

3. The third line of text contains an English usage error: the verb form "was" does not agree in number with its subject, "we." The correct answer for this line of text is, therefore, B because it is the letter that appears beneath the error.

4. The fourth line of text contains no error. Answer H, "No Mistake," is, therefore, the correct answer choice. Answers E, F, and G are all written correctly and are all, therefore, incorrect answer choices.

Instructional Emphases

Students at this level need to realize the importance of honing their proofreading skills. This skill will continually gain importance as students advance to higher levels of learning. Essays, compositions, and term papers or reports will become increasingly emphasized in many subject areas. Students must realize that their ideas can be effectively communicated only when their writing is clear, concise, and relatively free of mechanical errors.

Encourage your students to reread their written work carefully to check for errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and English usage. Practice and review in each of these four areas will contribute to the acquisition of skill in proofreading. A "screen," that is, a knowledge of rules for each individual skill area, should be developed in a student's mind. Such screens act as filters through which, ideally, writing mechanics errors are not allowed to pass.

Possible Instructional Activities

Verb ID

Students can become familiar with verb tenses and subject-verb agreement by determining the proper verb form to use in a given context. Prepare a group of sentences in which you leave a blank where the verb would appear. (For example, "Both of the tires on the truck _____ flat.") Underneath each sentence, provide at least four different versions of the correct verb (for example, "is," "are," "was," "were"). Indicate which tense is required for each sentence, either with the tense written in parentheses after the sentence or by including a time indicator such as "yesterday" or "tomorrow" in the sentence. Thus, if the exemplified sentence is to be completed in the present tense, "are" would be the correct answer to the above example sentence.

As an oral variation of this activity, present (on the board or on a transparency) a sentence in which the verb has been replaced by a blank and call on students to read the sentence aloud, providing a properly formed verb to complete the sentence. Several students can complete the same sentence, using different

Several students can complete the same sentence, using different verbs. Repeat with additional sentences.

Spot and Fix

Compose a list of sentences, each of which contains three errors representing three of the four skills of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and English usage. Each sentence should contain at least one misspelled word. For example:

1. Yesterday we haved a selebration at our School.

2. Mr hynes are working in the science labratory.

3. Their is a peculiar insect on Brendans desk.

4. Do your sister have a driving lisense yet.

5. The man past Me a pamphlet about nucliar energy.

Ask students to underline the three parts of each sentence in which errors appear. Students are then to rewrite the sentences correctly. Thus, the list of sentences above would be corrected by the student as follows:

1. Yesterday we haved a selebration at our School.
   Yesterday we had a celebration at our school.

2. Mr hynes is working in the science labratory.
   Mr. Hynes is working in the science laboratory.

3. Their is a peculier insect on Brendans desk.
   There is a peculiar insect on Brendan's desk.

4. Do your sister have a driving lisense yet.
   Does your sister have a driving license yet?

5. The man past Me a pamphlet about nucliar energy.
   The man passed me a pamphlet about nuclear energy.

Call on students to write corrected sentences on the board. Discuss errors.

Peer Proofreading

In class, have students write a page on a topic that is likely to elicit uses of capitalization and problematic spelling words. (Punctuation and English usage problems are apt to arise regardless of the topic prescribed.)

Have students exchange papers and proofread each other's work. Collect papers and check for common errors, particularly those that were missed by proofreaders. Present these errors in

a review session. You may want to repeat this activity periodically and note students' overall progress in writing and in proofreading.